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Chairman: U Mya Than ..... (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

The Chairman: I should like to express, on behalf of the Member States of the First Committee and on my own behalf, our deepest condolences and sympathy to the delegation of Sri Lanka on the sad news of the passing away of the former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. She was the first woman Prime Minister in the world and had played an important role in the field of disarmament. It was during her chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement that the non-aligned countries proposed the convening of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I). We are deeply sorry at her passing.

I call on the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Palihakkara (Sri Lanka): I wish to express my sincere gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Committee, for the moving sentiments expressed on the sad occasion of the passing away of our former Prime Minister, The Honourable Sirimavo R. D. Bandaranaike.

As you mentioned, Sir, the people of Sri Lanka take modest pride in Mrs. Bandaranaike's legacy as the first elected woman Prime Minister. Equally, her life as Prime Minister of my country had much relevance to the mandate and work of our Committee, for she was a champion of the cause of disarmament. As you also mentioned, it was under Mrs. Bandaranaike's leadership during Sri Lanka's chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement that the non-aligned countries initiated the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament — the proposal was made in this very Committee — leading eventually to a historic international consensus on multilateral arms control and disarmament: the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978.

I assure you, Sir, that the sentiments you expressed will be communicated to the members of the family of the late Mrs. Bandaranaike and to the Government of Sri Lanka.

Agenda items 65 to 81 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Luck (Australia): I should like to express the Australian delegation's congratulations on your appointment, Sir, as Chairman of this Committee, and to say how delighted we are to see you guiding our work. We look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks.

As we debate the relative merits of the various draft resolutions before us, it is sometimes easy to forget why we are here and what we are all striving to achieve at a more fundamental level. The United Nations was formed 55 years ago with its

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primary purpose, as reflected in Article 1 of the Charter, being

> "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

Preventing threats to peace requires the building of confidence between nations and the development of an effective international security system. Within the purview of the First Committee, removing threats to peace includes contributing to the development of international instruments to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and working towards their elimination. Like many other countries, Australia has a proud record of contributing to these twin goals. This contribution is based on the recognition that our national security cannot be achieved in isolation from global security. Our national and regional security is best enhanced through the development of an international security system and through the removal of the threat to peace posed by weapons of mass destruction and the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons. Only in a stable global security environment can our national security be guaranteed. This is as true for all the nations represented here as it is for Australia.

Despite a complex and uncertain global security environment, a stocktaking of recent achievements shows that we have made significant progress in carrying out our mandate.

On the positive side of the ledger we have the following achievements: the landmark outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which set the international community an ambitious nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda for the next five years; the conclusion of and strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has firmly established a powerful international norm against further nuclear testing; significant progress towards the ultimate goal of a global ban on landmines through the implementation of the Ottawa Convention; and the commencement of serious preparations for the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

If we have made progress, it is also true that we have much unfinished business. This is widely understood. That being so, the continuing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament defies credibility. As the only body specifically mandated to negotiate international arms control instruments, the Conference on Disarmament has a clear agenda and a well-defined work programme on which there is a broad measure of agreement. While the vast majority of countries represented in the Conference on Disarmament want to get on with that work programme, regrettably we remain idle, essentially because of the insistence of a few on linking all the elements of the proposed work programme on an all-or-nothing basis. It is of concern to Australia that the legitimate aspirations of the majority continue to be held hostage in this way.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference has set the international community a challenging nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda for the next five years. Our first priority must be to consolidate this achievement through the work of the First Committee. But of even more importance, if we are to preserve the spirit of cooperation and commitment evident at the Review Conference, is the need for the NPT parties to push ahead with early, determined implementation of Review Conference outcomes.

The package of measures agreed to by the nuclear-weapon States at the Review Conference sets a significant benchmark for progress towards nuclear disarmament. It is for all NPT States parties now to translate their clear statement of intent into concrete action. In that regard, we welcome the recent statement by the nuclear-weapon States concerning security assurances for Mongolia.

A clear priority for all States is the entry into force of the CTBT. It is disappointing that the CTBT is not yet formally in force. But it is in provisional operation, with 160 signatories and 65 ratifications. There is no doubt that the CTBT has firmly established a powerful international norm against further nuclear testing, as demonstrated by the strength of the reaction to the developments in 1998. As a lead co-sponsor of the First Committee draft resolution on the CTBT, we take this opportunity to urge those yet to sign or ratify the Treaty to do so without delay. We encourage all ratifiers to consider what action they might take to promote the CTBT's early entry into force. Australia recently made a further round of diplomatic representations to Asia-Pacific countries and countries in the group of 44 whose ratification is required for entry into force, and we will continue our efforts to this end.

Both the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference identified the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty as one of the most urgent disarmament and non-proliferation steps the international community should take. Yet, despite having been repeatedly endorsed by all States present here, negotiations on the treaty have yet to start. It is disappointing and frustrating that the Conference on Disarmament is yet to commence negotiation of this logical next step on the nuclear arms control and disarmament agenda. While the reasons for this situation are familiar to us all, it makes little sense that some of those who claim to accord the highest priority to nuclear disarmament have not seized the opportunity to make a contribution to that goal through the early negotiation of a cut-off treaty. Pending negotiation of the treaty, we look to all relevant States to join a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Australia is a committed supporter of the strengthened safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) developed to remedy the limitations exposed by Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons programme. Full effectiveness of the strengthened safeguards system will be achieved only when there is universal adherence to the Additional Protocol to IAEA safeguards agreements, which makes this a key non-proliferation goal. We are pleased to have been the first country to ratify an additional protocol, and urge all States yet to sign and ratify an additional protocol to do so as quickly as possible.

The development and proliferation of ballistic missiles — the prime delivery means for weapons of mass destruction — destabilizes regional and global security. Australia is deeply concerned that more countries are acquiring ballistic missile technology, and that ballistic missile programmes in some of these countries are increasing in sophistication and effectiveness. Australia firmly supports efforts to combat missile proliferation, including through the imposition of national export controls and, where appropriate, the negotiation of bilateral agreements. Multilateral efforts to develop international norms against missile proliferation could also have value in building confidence and in supplementing non-proliferation objectives. It is also worth noting the connection between missile proliferation and interest in the development of missile defence systems. Missile defence is a direct response to the ever-increasing threat posed by missile proliferation.

Small arms currently cause more injuries and deaths than any other category of weapon, and the conflicts they fuel cost economies and societies dearly. The easy availability of small arms contributes to political instability, as recent events in the South Pacific, a region of key importance to Australia, testify.

Australia is particularly pleased to see the advent of a number of regional programmes to promote practical solutions in areas like demobilization, post-conflict reconstruction, and stockpile destruction and management. These regional programmes will have the greatest impact on reducing the devastating impact of small arms on civilian communities in situations of risk.

While such programmes have been prevalent in Africa, Europe and the Americas, the Asia-Pacific region is also addressing small arms issues in a constructive way. This month the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) will hold an experts group meeting on transnational crime, including discussion of small arms. Australia hopes this meeting will encourage ASEAN Regional Forum members to develop regional approaches to small arms issues. Also, at a meeting this month, leaders of South Pacific Forum countries will consider model legislation designed to encourage a common regional approach to weapons control. Australia has been closely involved in the development of this model legislation which, if approved, will mark a positive step forward in the region's efforts to effectively regulate weapons flows. Australia firmly believes that regional programmes such as these serve as building blocks for a broader international response to the problems posed by small arms.

Next year the United Nations will host the 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This Conference represents a landmark opportunity to put in place an international framework to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade and manufacture of small arms. Australia firmly believes that, working together, United Nations members can achieve positive, practical outcomes from the 2001 Conference.

An effective protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is a high priority for Australia. We are confident that an effective protocol to

strengthen the Convention, which delivers tangible security benefits to all, can be achieved. Australia is strongly committed to bring the BWC Ad Hoc Group negotiations to a successful and timely conclusion, in accordance with its mandate, before the Fifth BWC Review Conference. This will require a substantive, high-level political commitment on the part of all those involved in the negotiations to develop a robust compliance regime that reinforces the global norm against biological weapons.

In pursuit of a world truly free of landmines, Australia believes that it is important we work to encourage universal adherence to the Ottawa Convention. In support of this, Australia is working with the Australian Network of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to develop a collaborative programme to encourage support for the Convention among the countries of South East Asia.

Finally, until a comprehensive global ban on landmines is achieved, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will continue to play an important role in limiting the humanitarian impact of landmines, particularly given that it brings in key producers and users of landmines which have not ratified or acceded to the Ottawa Convention. Australia regards the CCW as an important instrument of international humanitarian law. Consistent with our long-standing support for the Treaty, I am pleased to announce that Australia would be willing to serve as President of the 2001 CCW Review Conference. We look forward to the support of other States Parties to the Treaty for our candidature.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation looks forward to working closely and constructively with you and with other delegations over the coming weeks.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): Mr. Chairman, please allow me to begin by congratulating you and offering to you and to your Bureau our support and cooperation. Like many here, we are personally aware of your achievements and dedication to the cause of disarmament. We are confident that your vast experience and wisdom will serve all of us well in our work.

Mr. Chairman, you lead us in our work at a most momentous time, a time of renewed hope and promise for peace and disarmament. Barely a year ago, as we looked forward to a new millennium, that sense of hope was at a low. Even today, there is still much we have to do, and the list of specific disarmament tasks is indeed a long one. But, today, recent events have given us reason to hope anew and to find the strength to meet the challenges before us.

We have achieved some progress in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) process; our leaders spoke with one voice on disarmament at the Millennium Summit, particularly on weapons of mass destruction; we are close to holding a meaningful small arms conference; the deployment of a national missile defence has been postponed; and the momentum in carrying out the Ottawa Convention is building. In our region, tensions on the Korean peninsula have been reduced, and so has the spectre of proliferation. Mongolia has firmly established itself as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the five permanent members of the Security Council have issued security assurances to Mongolia, a development that we welcome. Negotiations with the nuclear Powers on our own South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone are about to resume, and we remain hopeful that outstanding issues will be resolved.

We began our NPT Review Conference this year under a virtual nuclear cloud of disappointment. Nuclear arsenals and strategic doctrines were not being abandoned; nuclear proliferation fears had exploded into a nuclear proliferation reality in South Asia; the START process was at a stalemate, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) suffered a very public defeat; and negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty had stalled. But, under the able guidance of Ambassador Baali of Algeria, and to the credit of all delegations, the Conference succeeded in adopting practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to implement the 1995 decision on principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament. The 2000 Review Conference was also marked by the collective and unequivocal commitment by the five Nuclear-Weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. While this is a welcome development, it is not enough, and we must work even harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament.

The work that we must do is before us in this Committee. We welcome once again Myanmar's draft resolution on nuclear disarmament as representing the aspirations of most of the Members of the United Nations, particularly the members of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also support the initiatives of the New Agenda Coalition through their comprehensive draft

resolution and recognize the uniqueness and significance of their approach. We also look forward to Japan's draft resolution on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We commend in particular the continuing efforts of Malaysia on behalf of the historic 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. This Advisory Opinion's significance must be underscored, for it represents a possible basis for nuclear disarmament.

The draft resolution of Russia, China and Belarus on anti-ballistic missiles (ABM) is a timely one and must be debated fully. Like many others, the Philippines believes that the ABM Treaty is a cornerstone of strategic stability and an important part of a broader disarmament process. In this regard, the broader disarmament context makes us look at Iran's draft resolution with interest. Iran's draft resolution on missiles opens a new avenue for our work and we must consider Iran's proposal closely, with a view to adopting effective measures to curb the proliferation of missiles for weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear weapons hold the potential for massive death and destruction. But today, death is being brought by weapons less massive and deceivingly small: landmines and small arms and light weapons. Seemingly endless in number, relatively inexpensive, easily transported and even easier to use, small arms are being used to kill, coerce and threaten thousands. Conflicts are harder to resolve and post-conflict peace is more difficult to maintain because of the easy availability of these weapons.

Next year's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will provide an important opportunity to deal with this issue. I believe that the groundwork was laid during the first session of the Preparatory Committee and that, early next year, we will be going into our second session armed with the excellent inter-sessional work done by our Chairman, Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique. I hope that we will be able to work out the procedural aspects of the Conference before we finish our work in the First Committee.

In my region, consultations have been held and we thank the Governments of Indonesia and Japan and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for organizing these consultations. We wish to thank Ambassador Dos Santos in particular for giving so much of his time and effort to regional consultations. During the small arms Conference, I am confident that we will come to agreement on measures to prevent illicit trade and transfers, address the humanitarian needs created by this problem and consider other cooperative measures to deal with weapons already on the ground that have to be collected and destroyed. We have seen that this can be done. We commend the efforts of the countries of Africa in addressing the small arms issue, including the moratorium on the import, export or manufacture of light weapons adopted by the Economic Community of West African States. In spite of inherent difficulties, the recent destruction of over 1,000 small arms in Agadez, Niger, has shown that, with sheer determination and the cooperation of the United Nations, donor communities and civil society, small arms can be collected and destroyed.

In the area of collecting and destroying weapons, the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction also stands out and serves as an inspiration. Mines have been cleared not only in mine fields, but also in national arsenals. More States are becoming parties and in record time. The numbers of victims have decreased, while the resources available to assist victims have increased. Members of civil society have taken an active and significant role and have proven themselves most effective. The momentum is indeed building and was given a massive push when our leaders called for the universality of the Ottawa Convention during the Millennium Summit.

While we must be relentless in our efforts on the issues of small arms and landmines, we must also continue to strengthen efforts on behalf of arms-transparency measures. In this regard, the Philippines fully supported and will continue to support the resolution of the Netherlands on transparency in armaments. We have been able to move forward in some areas in disarmament, but there is still much work to be done and it cannot all be done at the yearly gatherings of our Committee. The time is ripe for us hold the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We must hold it in the next few years and we must begin by agreeing to hold a Preparatory Committee meeting next year, before the fifty-sixth session. Over the years, in this Committee and in the Disarmament Commission, much

progress has been made in terms of the objectives and agenda for the fourth special session. The Philippines believes that this prior work should be the basis of our future actions and that we must all show some flexibility. I take this opportunity to commend Indonesia for its efforts on behalf of the fourth special session and for its excellent work and sometimes difficult tasks as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement's working group on disarmament.

In our region, we also continue to collectively work towards our common disarmament goals. One very important forum for us is the United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which, while operating completely through voluntary contributions, has actively kept up in a meaningful and significant way the disarmament dialogue in my region. The Philippines supports the position of the Association of South-East Asian Nations on the Centre, commends the work of the Centre and its Director and believes that the successful operations of the Centre should be continued.

In the last century of the last millennium, my region witnessed the first military use of nuclear weapons and nuclear-test explosions greeted the arrival of the new millennium. In addition, tensions remain in some areas in my region, where the threat or use of nuclear weapons are not remote possibilities. It is in this particular context that the Philippines remains committed to working in this Committee and elsewhere to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction and to limiting conventional arms to reasonable levels. This commitment is as firm today as when we first signed the Charter and it is a commitment based on renewed hope and promise for global peace and disarmament.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): I extend to you, Sir, and to the other members of your Bureau congratulations on your well-deserved election to lead the First Committee at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Given your expertise in the field of disarmament and arms control, coupled with your diplomatic skills, my delegation is confident that you will steer the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion.

In his opening remarks before this Committee on 2 October 2000, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, observed that the world was awash with arms. He provided shocking statistics that members of this Committee should bear in mind throughout this session. Among these are the fact that there are some 30,000 nuclear warheads and some 500 million small arms and that global military expenditures are rising, and yet almost half of the world's population live on less than $2 per day. The Under-Secretary-General's revelations should encourage members of this Committee to work hard to achieve a common position on all the agenda items before this Committee.

The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted a consensus Final Document at the sixth Review Conference held this year in May. For the first time in the history of the NPT, a Final Document was adopted by consensus. My delegation welcomed this development because it was an expression of the unequivocal political commitment of all States parties — and, in particular, of the nuclear-weapon States — to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We must seize the new global consensus demonstrated at the Review Conference to strengthen further the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

As members are aware, never before have the parties reached agreement on such a wide range of issues in furtherance of the goal of non-proliferation. Such an outcome could not have been foreseen, given the divergent approaches employed by the nuclear-weapon States in the year preceding the Review Conference. The positive outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference should give further impetus to our Committee to initiate further steps in support of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. With this commitment and agreement on the measures required to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, the States parties must now implement their undertakings under the Treaty.

On the other hand Zambia is concerned that the Conference on Disarmament failed to reach agreement on such crucial matters as the fissile material cut-off for nuclear weapons and the important goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.

The Final Document of the NPT Review Conference also underscored the important role of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a basis for global nuclear disarmament. My delegation recognizes that, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of a given region, nuclear-weapon-free zones enhance global and regional peace and security and

thus contribute to our efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament.

My delegation will at this session, as it has done in the past, work with other delegations to further strengthen the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Pelindaba, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok. I hope the other regions will move quickly to establish similar zones. Zambia will also continue to support the consolidation of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm its commitment to and support of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, which is one of the pillars of the non-proliferation regime. The resolution on the item will continue to enjoy the support of my country. My Government wishes to appeal to all the nuclear-weapon States to maintain their unilateral moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia is committed to the total elimination for all weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, my delegation calls upon all major weapon States to fully implement their commitments under the Chemical Weapons and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Conventions. The full implementation of their obligations under these two important international instruments will go a long way towards strengthening international peace and security. My delegation feels that there should be less politicization of the adherence to the treaties on weapons of mass destruction. What is important at this time is to strengthen the prohibitions and enhance international technical cooperation and broaden the existing verification mechanisms of each of the treaties that target all the weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, Zambia hopes the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems will be preserved and strengthened further. To do otherwise would be to undo all the gains of the past.

During the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the First Committee expressed its support for the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. This action was correct and should be repeated at this session.

Conventional weapons have caused misery and destruction of life and property in areas of conflict, very often in total disregard of international humanitarian laws. My Government looks forward to the forthcoming second review conference of the Convention, scheduled for 2001, as an occasion that will provide an opportunity to strengthen this very important Convention.

The Zambian Government supports the efforts of the United Nations to convene an international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, that is scheduled to be held in June 2001. The African experience in the use of small arms and light weapons in conflicts has confirmed the urgent need to seek ways to combat the impact of these arms on socio-economic development. The fact that my brother, Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos of Mozambique, is chairing the preparatory process for the conference is most welcome to my country. Mozambique suffered a lot from the effects of small arms on defenceless people during the sad period of the civil war.

Small arms and light weapons are the most used weapons on the African continent, responsible for high numbers of casualties. One of the cardinal issues underlying the problem is the uncontrolled spread and use of small arms worldwide. Illicit trade in these types of weapon has distorted their real market value to such an extent that it is possible to obtain a gun in an African setting for a price of about $10. My country has been working within the framework of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization to seek a regional solution to the problem posed by surplus stocks and illicitly held small arms in the region. My Government appreciates the support that the Kingdom of Norway and the Organization of African Unity have been providing to this effort.

The efforts of the United Nations to address the problem of small arms and light weapons require increased support by all the Member States in order to be successful. The increasingly active role that United Nations development agencies are playing in identifying the underlying causes of conflict, which create the demand for small arms, is in this regard most welcome. This effort should be complimented by a firm commitment by Member States to provide much needed financial and other resources to our organization. The United Nations Development Programme Trust Fund for Support to Prevention and

Reduction of the Proliferation of Small Arms is one initiative that deserves the support of all Member States.

My Government strongly supports and commends the current international efforts to ban landmines. As all of us here know, landmines are the coward instruments of war that kill and maim innocent civilians long after the end of hostilities. Zambia welcomes the universalization of the United Nations Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention, which has succeeded in reducing production and export levels of anti-personnel landmines worldwide.

At the second Meeting of the States Parties held from 11 to 15 September 2000 in Geneva, it was gratifying to note that observance of the Ottawa Convention has led to a drastic reduction in the number of countries still producing these weapons. In addition, there has been almost a complete stop to exports of landmines and an increase in the number of countries reporting on stockpile destruction in the last two years since the Convention came in force. This development is a major achievement by the international community.

The role of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in this effort deserves the support of all our States. The last year witnessed an increased role by this body in mobilizing public awareness of the effects of landmines on the socio-economic development of the affected countries. My delegation wishes to thank His Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and his committed staff for the efforts they have devoted to the problem of landmines in the past year.

There is still a continued need for more financial and material resources to support the action programmes going on in the affected countries. The wealth of experience that UNMAS has accumulated over the years makes it a suitable organization to support in its landmine clearing activities. I appeal to all countries to support its efforts.

In conclusion, I wish to state that my Government has faith in the multilateral disarmament process. This is based on our conviction that global security is the foundation for national peace and stability and is a vital element for social and economic development. In this regard, Zambia will continue to support the call to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The holding of this session, which has been unduly delayed, is in the best interest of international peace and security.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to join other speakers in expressing my delegation's warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee, as well as to members of the Bureau on their election. My delegation will extend its fullest cooperation to you to ensure the successful conclusion of the work of this Committee.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Viet Nam, who spoke on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The post-cold-war era has seen both gains and setbacks in the realm of disarmament. On the positive side, the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and the Chemical Weapons Convention have both entered into force. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been concluded, nuclear safeguards have been strengthened and nuclear-weapon-free zones now embrace all of the southern hemisphere. The number of nuclear weapons has been almost halved since 1982, and world military expenditures declined by some 30 per cent between 1990 and 1998. A further positive and welcome development was the Russian Federation's ratification of the START II agreement. All these achievements have made our world a much safer place for current and future generations.

However, with the continued existence of nuclear weapons, the world is not entirely safe. The international community must not allow itself to be lulled into complacency as long as these weapons, the greatest threat to our survival on this planet, continue to exist — and they exist in the thousands in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States. Our long-term goal must remain the elimination of all of these weapons. Therefore, the multilateral search for genuine measures for disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly in the nuclear area, must remain the highest priority on the global disarmament agenda.

It is therefore with deep dismay that we note the lack of any progress in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in recent years. Efforts by the non-nuclear members of the Conference on Disarmament to effect a

more constructive approach in the work of the Conference continue to be thwarted by the nuclear-weapon States. The continuing impasse in the Conference is a matter of serious concern to the international community. It reflects the stubborn adherence by the nuclear-weapon States to old and outmoded concepts of national security, based on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. It also reflects their continued reluctance to begin to address seriously the issue of the further reduction of their nuclear arsenals, and their lack of serious commitment to the goal of the complete elimination of these weapons.

The impasse in the Conference on Disarmament has been further complicated by developments in the area of anti-ballistic defence systems, specifically the efforts to develop and deploy the so-called national missile defence system. The deployment of such a system will have a highly destabilizing effect on international security and is likely to lead to a new arms race. This would be a major setback to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. While we are relieved at the decision not to proceed with the programme for the time being, we would strongly urge that the missile defence system not be developed or deployed because of the serious ramifications of such actions for international security. We would urge, instead, that the existing ABM Treaty be strengthened, while the issue of the threat of global missile proliferation is addressed in a serious fashion.

Malaysia is gratified that last year it was admitted to the Conference on Disarmament, along with four other new members. However, there are still some 21 other States awaiting admission. They should be admitted without further delay. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament should open its doors to interested countries so as to benefit from the wealth of ideas that would result from the broadest possible membership. We do not believe that an expanded membership would necessarily make the Conference less effective. What has made it ineffective is the continuing lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to agree to a substantive work agenda for the Conference.

My delegation welcomes the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For the first time in 15 years, States parties to the Treaty were able to reach a consensus on several issues crucial to the security of all the peoples of the world. They pledged to make new efforts aimed at the total elimination of nuclear arsenals, halting the global spread of nuclear weapons and strengthening the essential standards governing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, unless these commitments are followed up by serious and concrete action, the pledges will remain platitudes — mere statements of intent that will be repeated at every review conference of the NPT. It is imperative that these pledges be kept and translated into actual deeds. It is imperative also to ensure that there is no let up in the global campaign to achieve nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. More strenuous efforts should be made to bring the few countries remaining outside of the NPT into the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Despite recent setbacks, the universalization of the Treaty should remain our constant goal.

My delegation is encouraged by the increase in the number of ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) during the past year. However, the challenges that confront its entry into force persist, especially after the United States Senate's rejection of United States ratification of the Treaty in October 1999. That decision was clearly a major setback to the efforts to effect a global ban on nuclear testing. It generated serious concerns about the entry into force of the Treaty. It remains our hope that this unfortunate decision will be reversed in the near future. It is also our hope that the remaining number of the 44 countries stipulated in article XIV of the CTBT will accede to and ratify the Treaty so as to effect its entry into force as soon as possible.

In July 1996, the overwhelming majority of the international community welcomed the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the use and threat of nuclear weapons, which, inter alia, reinforced the legal obligation of States Parties to the NPT to implement article VI of the Treaty. Regrettably, this Opinion continues to be ignored by the nuclear-weapon States. Malaysia attaches great importance to the world court's Opinion and has, since 1996, been actively involved in sponsoring a draft resolution on this subject in this Committee. We intend to take the same initiative during this session of the General Assembly. We hope that, as in previous years, the draft resolution will enjoy wide support from Member States.

The month of March this year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Today, the Biological Weapons Convention remains more significant than ever and the spirit that inspired it is very much alive. As advances in biotechnology are increasing the potential threat posed by biological weapons, there is an urgent need to speed up the negotiations on a verification regime for the BWC. The Convention has made an important contribution towards the world community's collective efforts to eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction. It is imperative, therefore, that those States that have not ratified or acceded to this Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) should do so at the earliest opportunity so that the effectiveness of the Conventions can be further enhanced through their universality. We believe this goal is attainable.

With regard to conventional weapons, the picture is not much better. Conventional weapons have become even more sophisticated, and hence more lethal. Thanks to the aggressive marketing efforts of the arms vendors of the industrialized countries, these weapons are now in the arsenals of impoverished countries, which can ill afford them. Currently, a lot of attention has been focused on the need to limit the proliferation of small arms. These weapons, which have killed the largest number of people in the history of human warfare, continue to be the main instruments of death and destruction in many conflicts in the world, particularly in Africa. Largely neglected at the multilateral level until the 1990s this category of weapons has now become a priority issue in the disarmament area. Indeed, in an unprecedented move, the Security Council met to consider the issue last year, both in general and in its specific impact on Africa. We, therefore, look forward to the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This Conference offers an unprecedented opportunity to focus global attention on the urgent need to address the issue of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Its success is bound to have an overall positive impact on conflict situations around the world. However, efforts in respect of conventional weapons — important as they are — should not detract from nuclear disarmament efforts, which should remain a top priority issue on the international agenda. In this regard, Malaysia strongly supports the call by the Secretary-General for the convening of an international conference to consider all aspects of the nuclear-weapons issue.

May I conclude by commending the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the able and dynamic leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala, for its important and indispensable work in the disarmament agenda of the United Nations. Let me also commend the supportive role of various non-governmental organizations, which have shared their knowledge and expertise with us, and inspired us to move the disarmament process forward. Malaysia considers them as indispensable partners in a common cause. We believe that non-governmental organizations and members of civil society have a vital and important role to play in promoting disarmament, particularly in drawing attention to the continuing threat posed by nuclear weapons. We pay tribute to their role and encourage them in their efforts.

Mr. Kaba (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to extend to you the congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee.

We know that your personal qualities and your extensive experience will guarantee the success of our work. In carrying out this mission, I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

We also wish to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Raimundo González, for his outstanding contribution to the success of the work of the Committee during the previous session.

During the recent Millennium Summit, the heads of State and Government of the entire world, basing themselves on the Charter, renewed their commitment to spare no efforts to rid mankind of the nuclear danger and the scourge of war.

This commitment simultaneously is sending a clear signal and a clear message to the nuclear Powers to ensure the advent of a world of peace and security for all. The primary responsibility in preventing the nuclear threat is theirs and it calls for real will on their part to take the necessary additional steps.

Indeed, for the international community, peace will continue to remain an illusion unless mankind rids itself of weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, all would agree that the continuation of differences of views in the disarmament field and the meagre progress made in negotiations for some two years now are a major source of concern. My Government notes with concern the stagnation of the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today, numerous nuclear-weapon countries are continuing to threaten the very survival of the human race by pursuing, in the secrecy of their laboratories, the development and improvement of weapons of mass destruction, ignoring in so doing the deepest aspirations of the international community.

In this connection, we wish to emphasize and deplore the fact that commitments undertaken by States for the limitation of nuclear weapons under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have not been accompanied by a coherent timetable for dismantlement under international control and, even less, by sufficiently transparent measures. This, to a great extent, explains the extreme slowness in the implementation of the NPT, START I, START II and the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM).

The same holds true for chemical and biological weapons, for the trade in fissile materials and nuclear technology, as well as transparency in procedures for the control of stocks of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles, missiles or anti-missile defence systems.

That situation simultaneously means a backing away from the NPT and an obstacle that continues to block the achievement of genuine progress and the implementation of confidence-building measures among States despite the end of the cold war.

In that context, the importance of the Conference on Disarmament continues to grow, as the sole forum for multilateral negotiations on issues of peace and disarmament.

Thus, the ratification last April by the Duma of the Russian Federation of the START II Treaty is a real reason for hope, which opens the way to further reduction of strategic weapons.

The same is true for the progress made in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) with the accession to date of more than 160 countries to that instrument, as well as the very encouraging expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

While adherence to the NPT regime by all States is a necessity of the most vital nature for the international community, that of adherence to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is no less urgent, given the continuation and proliferation of conflicts in the developing countries in general, and in Africa, in particular.

In this regard, the issue of the proliferation of light weapons, the ban on the stocking, transfer and utilization of anti-personnel landmines must remain at the focus of concerns of the international community, just as important as nuclear disarmament.

This is why my delegation hopes to see the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as the global conference on small arms in 2001, with the keen hope that these important meetings will provide a real opportunity for finding an adequate response to these questions.

With respect to small arms and light weapons, my country cannot pass over in silence its keen concern, given the proliferation, build-up and illicit trade in such weapons in Africa and, in particular, in conflict zones.

Since it shares borders with countries that are in armed conflict, my country, the Republic of Guinea, has, since 1 September, been faced with a series of bloody attacks perpetrated by armed bands, resulting in numerous casualties among civilians and significant material damage in border areas.

This most alarming situation is compounded by the burden and impact on various sectors of the economy for almost a decade now posed by the extended presence of nearly 800,000 refugees on our national territory. This seriously impacts the implementation of various projects and programmes for the economic development of the country and threatens its stability.

Despite these difficult conditions, Guinea, faithful to its tradition of peace and solidarity, is continuing resolutely to work together with the other member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the implementation of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in the subregion in accordance *with the recommendations of the* 1998 Summit of heads of State or Government of ECOWAS held in Abuja in October 1998.

My country would like to recall here its dedication to the strengthening of that moratorium, convinced that success in the struggle against the scourge and the proliferation of light weapons demands adherence of all. The Government of Guinea has just established a national commission on light arms and small weapons as a concrete expression of its will to fully carry out the responsibilities resulting from its commitments.

It therefore urgently appeals to the international community for firm support for this process, since it seems to us that there is an ever greater need today to accord this issue the full importance it deserves, given the huge number of men, women and children killed by these weapons every day in our countries. Guinea welcomes the holding in 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, whose work we hope will be backed by resolute decisions that can put a definitive end to this scourge that threatens the peace, security and stability of our States.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses the hope that the work of the present session of our Committee will make a significant contribution to advancing the priority goals of the international community: peace, disarmament and non-proliferation in a world of peace and security.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mrs. Junod (International Committee of the Red Cross): The recent Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was an important opportunity to take stock of the process of universalization and implementation of this unique Treaty. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) believes that the success of this Convention must be measured by the results achieved in mine-affected countries. Although a global assessment may be premature, statistics gathered by the ICRC and mine-action organizations show that the average number of monthly casualties due to landmines and unexploded ordnance has decreased significantly in several affected countries.

These developments are an encouraging indication that where mine use is halted and comprehensive and coordinated mine action is initiated — that is, where the Treaty is being implemented — lives and livelihoods are being saved. However, recent events sadly highlight the great urgency both of universalizing and implementing this Treaty, as the use of mines in a number of conflicts continues to bring new stories of death, injury and suffering.

Largely as a result of the resources mobilized through the Ottawa Treaty, the ICRC has expanded its activities in the areas of victim assistance and mine awareness. In cooperation with National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies, we are now conducting mine-awareness programmes in eight countries. In the past year new programmes have been launched in Lebanon, Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Russian Federation. The ICRC is also providing medical or surgical assistance to war-wounded, including mine victims, in 22 countries.

Today 107 States have ratified the Ottawa Treaty. Another 32 have signed it and are thus bound by its object and purpose. In other words, two thirds of the world's Governments have committed themselves to the elimination of anti-personnel mines and their consequences. We urge those that are not yet party to the Treaty to respond to the humanitarian crisis caused by anti-personnel mines and to adhere to it as soon as possible.

Although the international community has made significant progress in addressing the humanitarian problems caused by anti-personnel mines, the broader humanitarian problems caused by other explosive remnants of war, including anti-vehicle mines, submunitions, such as cluster bombs, and other unexploded ordnance, have not been adequately addressed. The preliminary findings of the ICRC indicate that the most direct and widespread humanitarian effect of anti-vehicle mines is the denial of humanitarian assistance. In many instances the blocking of essential food, medicine and other relief supplies and services worsens the situation of large parts of the civilian population in conflict and post-conflict areas.

Experts indicate that, as a result of their use and design, submunitions have predictably high failure rates that result in significant numbers of civilian casualties in a wide variety of conflicts. Of the 500 casualties reported in the 12 months following the end of hostilities in Kosovo, unexploded munitions, submunitions and anti-personnel mines each accounted for roughly the same proportion — one third — of the

victims. Unexploded submunitions are more difficult to clear than mines. They are extremely powerful explosives and are often highly unstable. Incidents involving submunitions were much more likely than landmines to result in death or injury to several people.

In the view of the ICRC, these findings indicate an urgent need to address in a comprehensive manner the humanitarian problems caused by explosive remnants of war. We have proposed consideration of a new Protocol to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to address the use and clearance of the wide range of unexploded munitions found in post-conflict settings. We look forward to working with States in the context of the 2001 CCW Review Conference to ensure that the problems posed by explosive remnants of war are urgently addressed. The ICRC recently hosted a meeting of governmental experts on this subject, which indicated an encouraging readiness to address this issue. A summary report will soon be available.

Given the nature of armed conflicts today, we consider that the expansion of the scope of the 1980 Convention's original protocols to also apply in non-international armed conflicts should be a priority for the upcoming Review Conference. Although there are a number of options for achieving this, we believe that the addition of a new protocol extending the scope of application might be an approach worth considering, since it would avoid some of the technical and legal complications of amending the framework Convention.

The ICRC welcomes the convening of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The ICRC's observations and recommendations in relation to small arms proliferation are contained in a study entitled "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict", which shows a strong link between high levels of arms availability and high levels of civilian casualties, both during and after periods of conflict. It highlights the fact that disease, starvation and ill treatment of civilians increase when humanitarian agencies, including the ICRC, are directly attacked and must suspend operations or leave a country.

We also note that as international arms transfers, particularly of small arms and light weapons, have become easier, promoting respect for humanitarian law has become vastly more difficult. For these reasons, we urge States to include on the agenda of the United Nations Conference the humanitarian effects of small arms.

Independently of this Conference, the ICRC urges States to review their policies concerning the production, availability and transfer of arms and ammunition in the light of their responsibility to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian law. When devising national policies on arms transfers and elaborating regional or international codes of conduct, criteria based on the likelihood of humanitarian law being respected should be included. This approach was endorsed in the Plan of Action of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held last year, in which almost all States parties to the Geneva Conventions participated.

The twenty-seventh International Conference also encouraged States which have not done so to establish mechanisms and procedures to determine whether the use of weapons, whether held in their inventories or being procured or developed, would conform to the obligations binding on them under international humanitarian law. States were also urged to promote transparency in relation to such weapon reviews. The Conference invited States and the ICRC to begin a process of consultations to promote such mechanisms and to analyse the extent to which the ICRC's health-based approach might assist States in the conduct of legal reviews. The ICRC has extended invitations to States to participate in such a consultation process.

The ICRC continues to be concerned by the fact that, in recent years, bullets capable of exploding on impact with a human body have been produced, sold and used. The 1868 Saint Petersburg Declaration prohibited the use of exploding bullets in order to protect individuals from suffering that serves no military purpose and that is therefore contrary to the principles of humanity. The ICRC is continuing its dialogue with States on this matter. It expects to report on this problem and will seek appropriate action during the 2001 review conference of parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of

the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We would urge States to mark those anniversaries by helping to ensure that the evil of biological warfare is never unleashed and that the stunning advances being made in the fields of microbiology, genetic engineering and biotechnology are not turned against humanity. The best way to do this would be to successfully conclude the long-running negotiations on an effective monitoring regime for the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

Mr. Oubida (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, to join previous speakers in warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am convinced that under your guidance the Committee's work will yield tangible results satisfactory to all member States. I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation. I wish also to convey to His Excellency Mr. Raimundo González our great appreciation for the excellent work the Committee carried out under his chairmanship at the fifty-fourth session.

The twentieth century proved to be the century that most gravely jeopardized the future of mankind. With two world wars that claimed countless victims, notably civilian victims, and with the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world learned with consternation the enormity of the threat looming over it. Those acts already reflected the determination of the great Powers to achieve undivided world domination. But they also opened the eyes of all peoples about the perils lying in wait for them; action taken since then have been aimed not only at reining in the arms race but also, first and foremost, at completely ridding the world of the nuclear threat.

I do not wish to yield to pessimism by saying that efforts until now have been in vain. But unfortunately, as members know, and as most speakers have observed, the danger persists, not to mention the fact that the ambitions that plunged us into two world wars also persist, and that new concepts such as the security and sovereignty of States make past action even more uncertain. Let us recall also that over the years military expenditures have exceeded spending in the economic and even social sectors; in 1999 they reached $780 billion. And apart from that excessive spending, the threat is spreading to outer space and is hanging over us like a sword of Damocles.

How could one fail to be concerned? Individual and collective efforts by States and the inestimable work of the United Nations notwithstanding, an utter lack of security remains. We must heighten our vigilance to ensure that the world will gradually be freed from nuclear weapons. Here, the commitment and collaboration of the nuclear Powers remains indispensable. And non-nuclear States should not lend their territory for nuclear testing or for the construction of nuclear plants. We venture to expect that the new century will give us grounds for hope — especially with the signing of the START II treaty by the United States and by Russia.

For its part, Burkina Faso follows developments in this sphere with keen interest. In its struggle against underdevelopment and poverty, my country takes the view that any reduction in military expenditure would provide both benefits for international peace and security and support for development projects.

The arms race has brought about a nuclear strike capability the threat of which has grown more acute and is common knowledge. It has also led to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which have likewise become a cause of alarm. Indeed, that phenomenon has brought the danger to the very threshold of States and poses a direct threat to their populations. The uncontrolled and often clandestine manufacture of small arms and of mines, and especially the trafficking in these weapons, have caused a proliferation that has become a source of open or latent conflict and of a generalized lack of security.

Poor countries, especially those in Africa, have in general been plagued by this for decades. Africa, despite development, remains a source of vast natural wealth that draws arms merchants and provides them with the profits they need to develop production as well as with a testing-ground for their products. The recent Accra conference denounced this, and condemned the use of light weapons by children. The atrocities seen in the conflict in Sierra Leone alerted the international community to the need for an urgent solution to this problem.

After harsh trials, Africa has organized with a view to curbing this evil. Experience on the ground has shown that while individual action remains important, its results are undermined by the porosity of borders and the lack of adequate controls. Thus, continent-wide

and subregional frameworks for exchange and cooperation have been created. That is reflected in the adoption by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of its moratorium and in the establishment of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Because of the geographical position of Burkina Faso — sharing borders with six countries — its security remains fragile. Our Government has therefore developed many initiatives to find viable solutions, through regional and subregional organizations such as the OAU, ECOWAS and the Council of the Entente. We have participated in operations such as the Bolt Union, Kompienga 97 and Cinkassé 2000, which are aimed at developing the individual capabilities of security forces along with regional cohesion among them and a will on the part of States to cooperate.

Internationally, Burkina Faso participates resolutely in deliberative forums and in those intended to negotiate conventions on security matters. Here, we played an active role in the negotiating process that led to the conclusion and signature of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I ought to mention that my country's commitment to that Convention was reflected in our immediate ratification. Moreover, need I recall that the Convention entered into force with Burkina Faso's deposit of its instrument of ratification?

At the domestic level, a committee established to follow up the implementation of international resolutions and agreements related to security has already begun its activities. Burkina Faso remains committed to these issues and will support every initiative in this framework.

Just as we deplore constraints on peace and security initiatives undertaken by the international community, we encourage every new action in that regard. Burkina Faso welcomes the United Nations proposal to organize an international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The objectives of such a Conference should be to pursue the development and strengthening of efforts by the international community to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which should logically lead to the elaboration and strengthening of international, regional and national norms to facilitate the coordination of efforts with regard to this issue. They should also result in measures to support such initiatives.

No evil can be remedied unless it is tackled at its roots. It seems to us that the illicit arms trade naturally follows the illicit and excessive manufacturing of arms. Weapons are a necessary evil for defending the territorial integrity of States and maintaining order. In short, they should be a deterrent factor and remain in the control of the Governments of producer States.

Unfortunately, the sad reality is that arms have today become the prerogative of sad individuals thirsting for profit, who do not hesitate to use any means to expand their enterprises. This evil must therefore be fought at that level. The manufacture of arms should cease to be the domain of the private sector and should be strictly controlled by Governments. Only on that basis can the arms trade be brought under control.

My country is ready to lend its modest contribution at every level to bring about the success of the Conference.

Mankind has been presented with a challenge. We must mobilize all our forces and energies to meet it. The third millennium must be one of peace, security, harmony and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. Current and future generations will judge us by the results we achieve and by our commitment to a better world — a world free from all nuclear threats, a world in which, whether from Kathmandu or Angola, people in the countryside will be able to work their fields without the risk of setting off a landmine or facing the threat of rebel arms.

The future of the world will therefore be what we want it to be. Let us commit ourselves to meeting that challenge.

Programme of work

The Chairman: I remind members once again that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions is 6 p.m. on Friday, 13 October, and that this deadline will be strictly observed. I urge members to submit draft resolutions as soon as possible, especially traditional draft resolutions and those that may entail financial implications.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.